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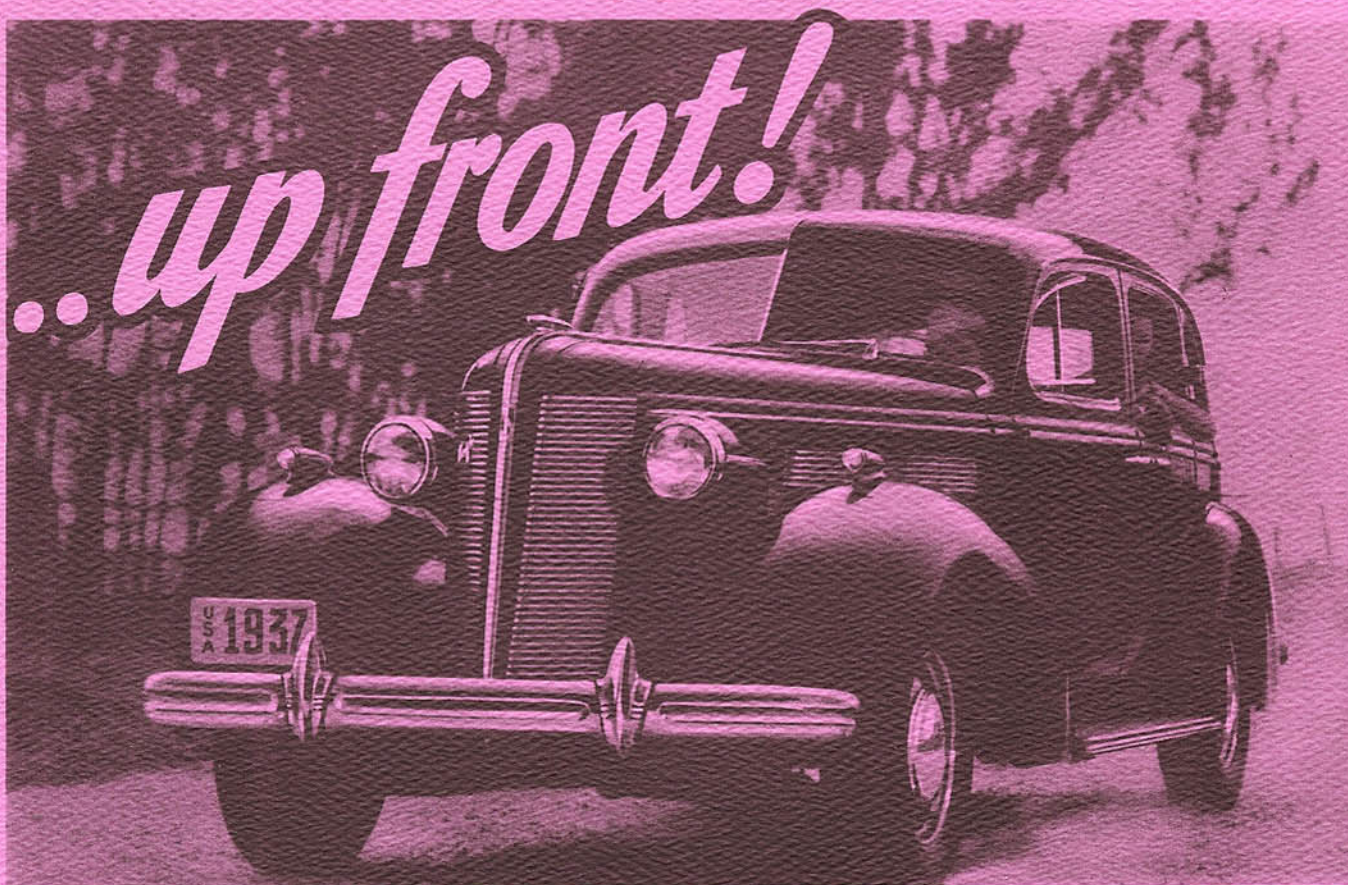
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THE TORQUE•TUBE

THE NEWS PUBLICATION FOR MEMBERS

OF THE 1937-1938 BUICK CLUB • FOUNDED 1980

PLENTY OF ROOM FOR YOU



Volume VII • Number 8



THE TORQUE-TUBE

THE NEWS PUBLICATION FOR MEMBERS OF THE 1937-1938 BUICK CLUB • FOUNDED 1980



VOL. VII, NO. 8 ☐ JUNE 1989

Big Bad Buick Bill

• ~~William E.~~ Olson, Editor •

• 842 Mission Hills Lane, Columbus, Ohio 43235 •

Club News

It looks as though I will be a little behind schedule with this issue. To those who are planning to attend the BCA National in Batavia, New York: if this reaches you before you leave, be prepared for a terrible disappointment. You'll see me, but you'll not see the '37 Roadmaster. I regret to say that it ground up its rear end and axle bearings. Although this was its major problem, there were a few other difficulties that required attention before one could even think about driving the car more than a few miles. The steering and front end had gotten so far out of whack that it was virtually impossible to move ahead in a straight line, and turning corners required brute force. We are well on our way to correcting these problems, but it has taken a hell of a lot longer than we thought it would. (In addition to me, "we" includes my friends and fellow BCA Central Ohio Chapter members Ed and Steve Hunkins, who are actually doing the work.)

I am certain that the ring and pinion were improperly set up, or came out of adjustment, several years ago or more, long before I acquired the car. This condition grew progressively worse. Last year I thought sure the whining and growling noises were in the transmission, and undertook to have it removed. A broken spring was found and replaced, and the transmission put back in — no easy job on a 1930's Buick. This effort diminished the noises only slightly. One consequence of torque tube drive is its apparent ability to transmit noise from one end of the car to the other. I would have sworn the noises were right next to my feet; however, when Ed sat in the back seat, he heard them in the rear axle.

When we took the cover plate off the rear end we found a nasty mess. Little pieces of metal came out with the oil. It was quickly determined that the ring and pinion were boat anchors, and all those little pieces had ruined the side bearings. Later



FOUNDED BY DAVE LEWIS

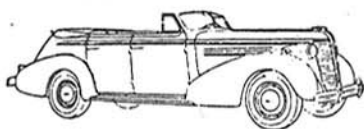


we found that the axle bearings were also bad.

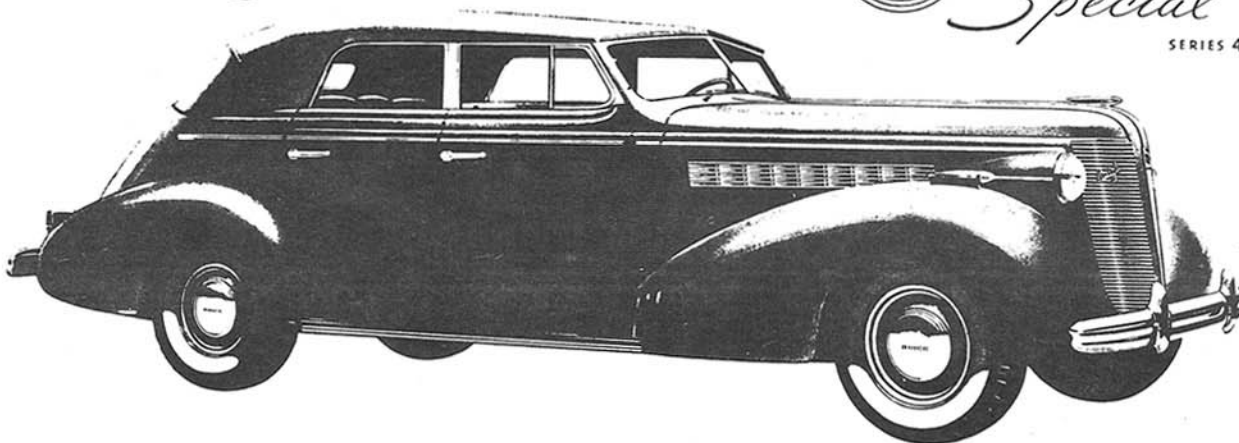
I then set about the task of finding useable '37 Roadmaster rear end parts. This is not exactly like finding — say — a water pump. A '37 Roadmaster ring and pinion set — so far as I have been able to determine — will interchange with exactly one other car: a '36 Roadmaster. That is to say: they are only slightly more numerous than frog hairs, chicken teeth, or V-16 Caddy distributor caps.* However, through the "network" of this Club, I was able to find the parts I needed. Special thanks for assisting me in this effort must go to John Huffman (#623), who put me on to a '37 Roadmaster street rod project (I kid you not) in Greenville, South Carolina, and to Larry McGray (#429) who put me on to former member Jim Hernke in Waukesha, Wisconsin, who actually put — successfully — a '53 or '54 Dynaflo rear end into a '37 80-C. In both cases the original rear ends had been saved, and I was able to obtain the parts I needed and more. (When the repair is finished, whatever good stuff is left over will, of course, be carefully preserved.)

Fortunately, Ed and Steve were planning to attend the Charlotte, North Carolina AACA parts meet in early April, and I was able to accompany them, along with a few other "buddies," in the relative luxury of a veteran Dodge motor home. (It is a veteran of perhaps hundreds of swap meets.) Fortunately, a few hours side trip to Greenville from Charlotte was all that was needed to obtain the street-rodder's rear end. Unfortunately: (a) it rained every day; (b) it was damn cold; (c) the furnace in the motor home didn't work; (d) the toilet in the motor home would handle only pee; (e) all my "buddies" snore and break wind in the night (I of course do not); (f) my "buddies" ate all my chocolate donuts; and (g) there was nothing at the swap meet I wanted. Notwithstanding all of that, the trip was great fun and an unqualified success.

The Roadmaster should be ready for the BCA Great Lakes Regional in August and our own Club Meet in Ohio in September. I'm hoping to go to Batavia in my "Pimpmobile" — that's a '76 Electra 225 I bought as a potential trailer-towing vehicle after discovering that GMC Suburbans cost \$25,000. The "Deuce-and-a-Quarter" has itself been the source of some grief, proving the validity of Olson's First Law and Olson's Fifth Law (see Issue 7), but that is, as they say, Another Story.



Special
SERIES 40



FIVE-PASSENGER CONVERTIBLE PRACON PLAIN BACK — MODEL No. 10-C

*My friend Clarence Hoffman (#546) would add lawyers in Heaven.



*Hail the Bridegroom -- hail the Bride!
When the nuptial knot is tied.*

...W. S. Gilbert, lyrics for Ruddigore, Act I

Hail also to the nieces and nephew of the groom at the nuptial knotting of Bill Shipman's daughter last summer. The girls are doing their best to match the dignity of Bill's '38 Roadmaster, but nephew looks like he has devilment on his mind.

Up until the mailing of the last issue (No. 7), I did all the envelope labelling, stuffing, sealing and stamping myself, and dropped the ready-to-go copies into various mailboxes and post offices as they were finished. (Steve Weinstein (#532) in California makes the labels.) As a general matter, I tried to follow a sort of staggered mailing schedule over four days, based on the estimated length of time in the mails: that is, overseas and Canada would go first, West Coast, Texas, northern New England, etc. next, states closer to me next, and Ohio and parts of Indiana and Michigan last. The object of this of course is to have all copies arrive at their destinations at the same time, or at least within one day.

The membership has been growing steadily — we are now close to 380 paid members — and I found that all this stuffing, stamping, etc. was taking a great deal of time, the better part of several evenings. (It is also incurably boring.) I therefore determined to have the printer do it with the U. S. copies as an experiment. The cost was not bad — \$98 for several hours work — but there remain some "bugs" to be worked out.

I did the overseas and Canada copies myself because these have varying rates of postage, and some must be stamped "Air Mail," etc. These were put in the Worthington, Ohio post office on Friday, May 26 or Saturday, May 27 — I forget which. Because of the Memorial Day holiday, the printer did not get the U. S. copies finished until Tuesday, May 30 and these — some 350 in all — were taken to the Lancaster, Ohio post office all at once. Although the post office should have been able to handle this easily, it didn't. The result was that some copies reached destinations in Europe on Tuesday, May 30, but some California members did not receive theirs until Saturday, June 3.

I am sorry about this, especially since Issue 7 was unusually rich in parts ads. I am not unhappy about overseas members getting a little break — they probably deserve one — and in any case disparity in time en route is a problem inherent in almost any publication in which items are offered for sale. However, we will try to have this and subsequent issues go out in a more orderly manner. If you are moved to gripe, feel free to do so, but remember this is an amateur, one-man, low-tech operation.



New member Tom Alderink (#735) spotted this tired 1937 Roadmaster formal sedan (model 81-F) on a Michigan lot and decided he needed it, or it needed him. There's a long way to go, but worse cars have become prize-winners.

Some of you may remember the song that begins "Dear John, oh how I hate to write..." and ends "...and tonight I wed another, Dee-er John." (Or something like that.) I haven't gotten any "Dear John" letters lately — in fact, the only one I ever got was in 1957 — but I do get a steady trickle — and occasionally a freshet — of mail from members and prospective members. Sometimes such mail is mildly annoying — as when the guy asks a question the answer to which was in the last issue — and sometimes it is partly or even wholly indecipherable. By and large, however, it is interesting and entertaining, and in any event I suppose one should rejoice in receiving mail that is neither bills, nor catalogs, nor the endless varieties of "junk."

Not "Dear John" but "Dear Bill" is the way most begin. Even though I may never have laid eyes on the writer, this familiar salutation seems appropriate enough, and consistent with the informal camaraderie sought to be fostered by this publication. However, some begin "Dear Sir" (or "Sirs"), or "Gentlemen," or even with that hoary archaism "To Whom it May Concern." There have also been "Hi Buick Fan"; "Dear Buicker"; "Dear People" and many others. Some finesse the salutation altogether, launching directly into the text. Dave Lewis used to seek to annoy me, with moderate success, by calling me "Billy." There is also "Dear Mr. Olson" and sometimes "Olsen." Curiously, most of the impersonal, businesslike "Dear Sir" - style salutations come from long-time members who ought by now to know what in hell my name is.

When I was a green Army recruit at Fort Dix, many years ago, I noticed a tendency among my fellow flunkies to address everyone above the rank of PFC as "sir." Many sergeants didn't like that: "Don't call me 'sir,' I ain't no —in' officer. I'm Sergeant Smith. Do you understand?" If that question was answered "Yes, sir" — I saw and heard it happen — one was in deep, deep trouble. I soon got straight who was a "sir" and who wasn't. Notwithstanding that the "sirs" were a distinct minority, I had in six years of Army Reserve duty enough of "yes, sir" and "no, sir" and "good morning, sir" and "reporting, sir" and all the rest of it to last me a lifetime.

DON'T CALL ME "SIR": I AIN'T NO OFFICER

The same goes for "Gentlemen" and "Sirs." Although I would, if pressed, admit to being a "gentleman" in American usage — i.e. a decent fellow who adheres to civilized standards of conduct — insofar as it has not fallen into disfavor as "sexist" the term implies a group of people engaged in a business enterprise.

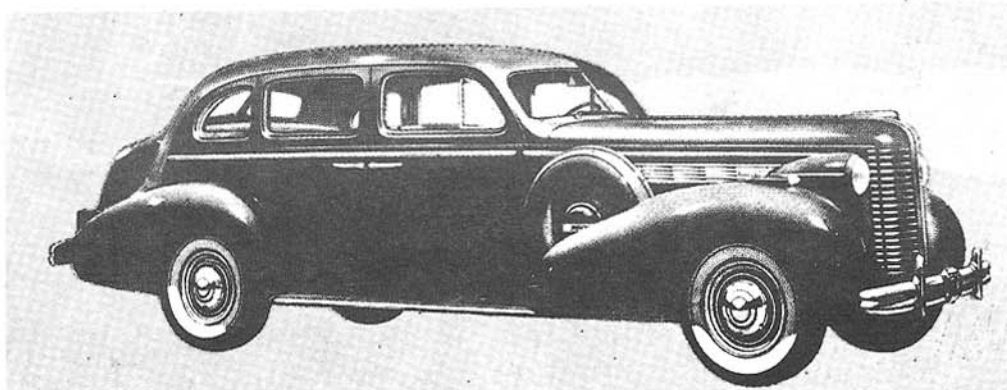
THERE'S ONLY ONE OF ME, AND THIS AIN'T NO BUSINESS.

Your sense of propriety may compel a "Dear Mr." for persons to whom you have not been formally introduced in the flesh, notwithstanding that these pages have probably introduced me as well as may be expected. If that be true — and I admit to being haunted by senses of propriety now and then, myself — at least spell it right.

Some of you seem pleased by a certain amount of editorial peevishness. I daresay you will go on calling me whatever you want, and, by whatever names called or modes addressed, I will, as the rose, smell as sweet. But that is this issue's Petty Peevishness, underscored by a temporary amendment to the "masthead" above.

"BILL" WILL DO NICELY

— Bill



Mail From All Over

The following comes from new member Louis ("Rich") Dickman (#765) of Ohio. As you will see, after reading a few borrowed copies of The Torque Tube, he quickly got the hang of things. Of course he was allowed in, even with a black car.

Dear Mr. Olson:

Enclosed please find my application and check for my first years membership. It's been one week since Lou Wildt lent me all his copies of Torque-Tube and I've been reading and making copies of all the articles I think will help me in getting my car road-worthy and maintaining it as well. I didn't have to read more than a few issues until I realized what an excellent job both Dave Lewis and you have done in organizing the club and putting out a fantastic publication.

There were times, however, in reading various letters and comments in the Torque-Tube that left me a little depressed. First of all, my 37 Model 41 has NO SIDEMOUNTS. Second, it's BLACK and third, it has NO GUIDE SUPER-RAYS. And if that's not enough for you, I've had the car about two months and my kids still haven't named it: I will tell you that I am not looking for driving lights, I have no plans to add sidemounts, the color should be black and so it will remain, and if my kids never name it, I don't care. It's my toy and I love it. With all these things understood, I hope you'll still accept my application.

Sincerely,

Rich Dickman

Speaking of naming cars, this message from John Breen (#533) is a bit intriguing.

Dear Bill:

If you can stand one more name-that-car story, here goes:

After your story about how your car got its name — Freya — and Clint Preslan added his — the last of the unicorns — I weighed in (literally) with "Stonecrusher" in Vol. VI, No. 1. Not exactly graceful or romantic.

A few months ago, I began to rewire the beast and because I wanted to replace the dash glass, I took the entire instrument panel out.

When I put it glass side down on the workbench, I noticed that in the upper left-hand corner on the unpainted back side someone had taken a pencil and written "Dorothy 1937" in script, in letters about a quarter inch tall. I could buy a coupe and call it Toto. Maybe paint it emerald green....

Have a good year.

John Breen (#533)

I said I'd harangue no more about the September Club Meet, and I'm not. Maybe the following message from Clarence Hoffman (#546), which was written on the back of his Meet registration form, will generate some more interest. This is a genuine unsolicited testimonial. Clarence is widely known as a man of the most delicate manners and refined tastes, and not easily impressed. If Clarence thinks it's good, it's good. (Regrettably, he's among the misspellers of my name, but, after all, nobody's perfect.)

Dear Brother Olsen,

One dreary Sunday morning in April, the girlfriend and I decided to drive down to the Mohican State Park Lodge at which our meet will be held this September. This not only gave me something to do with respect to the old-car hobby, it saved me a 25¢ stamp as well. It was only a 90-minute drive from Cleveland.

The lodge was just beautiful: huge beamed ceilings and great fireplace, with a magnificent view. The Lodge reminded me of one of those 1940's movies that starred Esther Williams, Ricardo Montalban, and Jimmy Durante in some light-hearted swim spoof. We also drove to Malabar Farm, and spoke with the two people who were in charge that day. We told them of our Club Meet in September, and that they would be afforded the opportunity to see some old Buicks. That really impressed them, and they gave us a free tour of the house--just the two of us--thereby allowing us to take all the time we wanted to check out Bogey and Bacall's honeymoon suite.

The house is still furnished as it was in the early forties and so fits in nicely with our era of Buicks. I'm sure that all who come this fall will not be disappointed. We're looking forward to a great time.

Your friend & mine,

Clarence Hoffman



My Grandfather's Yardmaster

BY CLINT PRESLAN (#461) — LAKEWOOD, OHIO

At Hershey last fall I bought a 1937 Buick "Service Guide." This 8-page 8½"x11" folder lists U.S. cities with authorized Buick agencies and surveys available for 1937 Buick accessories.

Under the Ohio heading, the listing for Lakewood, my home town, shows one Buick dealer. This dealer was The Bailey Buick Company, located on Detroit Avenue just east of Lakewood Hospital.

The Bailey showroom is still standing although it is now a medical supply store. I believe the showroom was built about 1920 and housed Bailey Buick until after World War II. When Bailey moved out, a Plymouth agency moved in. Years later, the medical supply people took over. In any case, Bailey Buick carved its name in stone above the front doors, and the name is there today.

Bailey Buick is indirectly responsible for me being a pre-war Buick fan. My grandfather bought his first Buick here, a 1935 model 41 sedan (a folkloric family event).



Bailey Buick building in Lakewood, Ohio as it appears today.

Early in 1939, he traded up for a sidemounted 1937 Roadmaster sedan purchased from Bailey's used car lot. I joined the family a year later and most of my early automotive memories involve the Roadmaster.

Recently I was talking to a long-retired Oldsmobile/Buick salesman (he sold Oldsmobiles for many years, then sold Buicks). The old gent did not share my enthusiasm for pre-war Roadmasters. According to him, the used-car fraternity used to call Roadmasters "Yardmasters" because "They would come in on a trade, and then sit there."

"They ate up gas," he said, "road like a hearse," and "were too heavy for most people to handle."

I remember my grandfather wrestling with the Roadmaster's steering wheel during low speed maneuvers, but I don't recall him uttering negatives about its road manners.

A "hearse?" On the contrary, the Roadmaster was (and is) an inspired design of "solid goodness" and exciting transport.

In essence, the old salesman's thesis was Roadmasters were large and expensive new, and when sold used, appealed only to a small segment of the market....they did not readily convert into dollars.

In March of 1941, my grandfather was tempted to trade his prized black '37 for a new Verde Green Roadmaster in Bailey's showroom. According to my dad, my grandmother pointed out the '41 had no sidemounts, no running boards, and came with a thick payment book. My grandparents got back into their '37 and drove it for the next seven years.

"Yardmaster", indeed.



Clint Preslan's grandfather with his 1935 Buick. "He was a big guy," says Clint, "and perhaps that's why he co-existed well with the Roadmaster's maneuvering qualities."



Clint's mother, as a college student in the 1940's, with classic nose of Grandpa's Roadmaster.



NEW MEMBERS



Roman B. Bentley (#763)
Box 410275
Kansas City, MO 64141
816/931-7004
'37 46 '38 60-C

Vic ("Poki") Pojas #764
94332 Leleaka St.
Mililani Town, HI 96789
808/623-3944
'38 46

Louis ("Rich") Dickman (#765)
9912 Baughman Rd.
Harrison, OH 45030
513/367-0514
'37 41

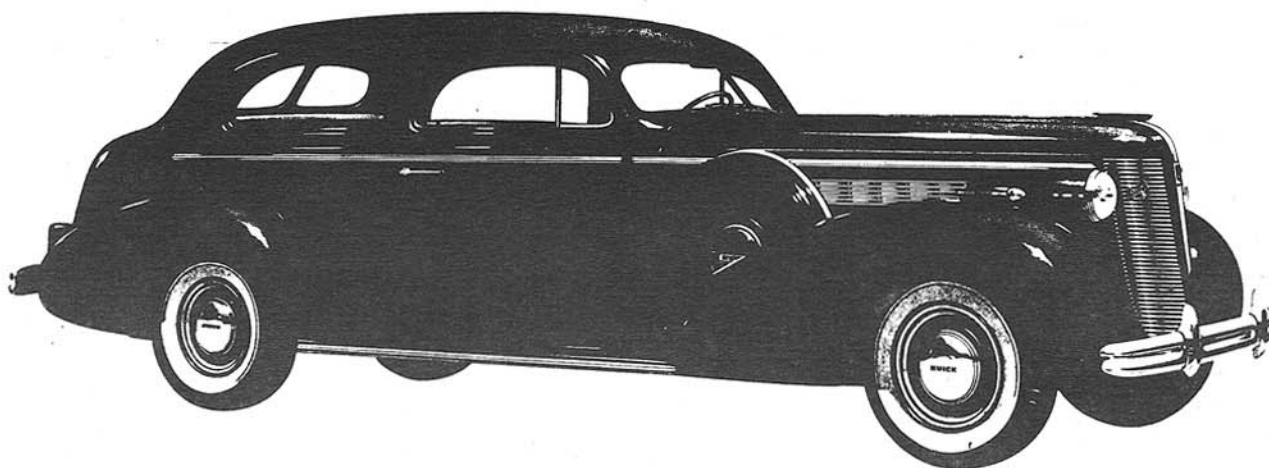
Jim Kloster (#766)
716 16th Ave. NW
Mandan, ND 58554

James E. Rufener (#767)
1748 Karis Way
Eagan, MN 55122
612/688-8058
'38 41

OLD MEMBER RE-JOINS

Billy Vivian (#174)
888 Coral Reef
Bullhead, AZ 86442

COPING WITH ADVERSITY



Dan McLaughlin Buys a Car

BY DAN MCLAUGHLIN (#466) — ROGERS CITY, MICHIGAN

I have finally elevated myself out of second-class status in this Club. I now own — believe it or not — a 1937 Buick. As you would expect from one of the primary exponents of the merits of equipping cars with fender wells, my car is so equipped. It is, indeed, the ubiquitous Model 41. I did encounter a Century Convertible Phaeton, Model 60-C at Traverse City last summer at the annual car show. It made one weak in the knees just to look it over as it was absolutely a 100 point car. Inasmuch as the owner wanted \$35,000 for it I reluctantly looked, photographed, and left it behind. A little like a peon watching the ball through the window.

I decided I needed something to drive to the various car events inasmuch as I have been subjected to much disdain due to my reliance on Brand X (a Packard). Even when I broke out my '69 Olds Wagon this didn't abate too much. Olds enthusiasts seem to be caught up in the muscle car thing and Buick (and Packard) fans are not impressed and a bit condescending.

So I saw an ad in The Buick Bugle with an affordable price and described as a reliable driver. I contacted the owner and determined to check the car out, though in New Jersey (have you heard of that place?)*. I decided to buy the '37 Buick if it lived up to the claims of the owner. He told me that he would have no qualms about driving it anywhere. Said that he had driven it all up and down the East Coast attending various shows during the past 25 years that he has owned it and it had never let him

*Yes, I have heard of New Jersey. I lived there twice. In fact, all of the members of this Club in Franklin County, Ohio — that's me and Jeff Morris — used to live in New Jersey. — Editor.

down. It would have been fun to drive it from New Jersey but I was a bit concerned about driving a 50 year old car all that way. Things do go wrong in spite of past experiences. Although I used to own one of these cars I haven't driven one for 35 years and there is a lot that I have forgotten. Therefore, I decided to rent a trailer and haul it home. My best way to handle the trailer rental, I thought, would be to rent one in the Philadelphia area, pick up the car if I decided on it, and haul it home, dropping the trailer off at our local U-Haul dealer. Well, I contacted the Philadelphia office of U-Haul and was told that they didn't rent the auto transporters for you to tow with your own vehicle. They would only rent them in conjunction with their truck—a package deal, so to speak.

Well, that may be the way they do it in Philadelphia but I know that around here you can rent them separately if you want. I called U-Haul headquarters in Tucson and they suggested that inasmuch as I had to go through Harrisburg perhaps I could get a trailer there, go to New Jersey, pick up the car and drop the trailer in Rogers City. Anyhow, I found the dealer at Harrisburg (actually Middletown) most accommodating and that is just what I did.

I took off from Rogers City Thursday, April 6 nice and early, 4:00 a.m. to be exact, and I got to a little town not far from Altoona called Ebensburg to stay overnight. On Friday I picked up the trailer at Middletown about 10:00 o'clock. It was a very good trailer and in fine condition and I was happy about that. I wanted to cross the Delaware River at Chester as (I thought) this would keep away from congestion. If it did keep away from congestion I would hate to see what they call congestion, as it seemed that there was a traffic light on nearly every corner and the constant starting and stopping was a pain. Nevertheless, I was across the bridge into New Jersey shortly after noon and it took me a little over an hour to find the location of the car. The fellow who owned the car didn't want to take off work but had promised to meet me at his house about 5:15 p.m. so I had some time to kill. I found a place to pull off the road and took a nap, then went to dinner and was at his place at 5:15. Unfortunately, by that time it had started to rain. It wasn't long before he pulled up, driving the Buick!

The car is a long way from perfect, has a few bumps and scratches and the front seat needs rebuilding, but these things were not surprises as the seller had mentioned all this when I had talked to him on the phone. The car does run well, and that's what I was particularly interested in. I've had enough projects for awhile.

Saturday morning we straightened out the financial matters and then came the problem of loading the car. I thought it would be simple but when the car was driven up onto the trailer the hitch popped off the ball so we had to back off and re-couple the truck and trailer. This sounds simple but that trailer hitch weighs plenty and you need three people. One to drive the truck and two to lift the hitch. The seller's brother showed up and we enlisted him and then it was simple. Now I had to strap the car onto the trailer. The front straps came with the trailer and they went into place easily but the trailer came with chains in the rear and I didn't want to use them. Instead, I brought two straps of my own. As I didn't really know just what was needed, I brought straps that were plenty long and this provided a nice exercise in shortening them to just the right length. It was about 45 minutes before that was done. Finally, everything was just right and I took off about 2:30 p.m. I had expected to load out the night before so I was hopelessly behind schedule.

After I crossed the bridge into Pennsylvania I somehow made a wrong turn and I was soon well on the way to Wilmington, Delaware! A quick check of the map showed how to correct the problem but it was difficult, with everyone whizzing by at 70 m.p.h. or more and cutting across lanes right and left. In due time, however, I was on the Pennsylvania Turnpike. Normally, I hate and avoid these roads but I found that the grades were easier, curves less sharp, there were no traffic signals and, away from

the large cities the traffic was easier to cope with. Unfortunately, I had left something behind at the motel at Ebensburg when I checked out so I had to return there. I noticed a strange thing as it began getting dark. I turned on my lights so as to be more visible to other motorists and I could see a light reflecting on the signs as I passed them but these reflections seemed to be intermittent—on and off, on and off. I checked the truck and, sure enough, that was the source! Well, I couldn't figure it out and I couldn't continue driving as it became darker so I decided to stay at a hamlet called Willow Hill, not far from Johnstown. The next morning the condition still existed so I couldn't start until it was light. As I climbed to higher elevations I found snow had fallen: fortunately, not a lot, and the roads hadn't been salted (ugh). I finally got to Ebensburg and picked up my package and was on my way again. Not too far from New Castle while coming down a rather steep grade I felt an ominous undulating in the rear of the truck. A flat tire! There were several cars behind me, anxious to get past and on their way and there was no shoulder of any size but I was nearing the bottom of the grade and coming to a small town, Shelocta. The shoulder wasn't any wider but I was able to pull off the road by driving up onto some poor soul's lawn. The truck was really down and there were a couple of inches of standing water at the edge of the pavement so it promised to be less than a delightful job changing the tire. I could have made it easier by removing the trailer but with all the trouble that I had had previously in hitching it I was in no hurry to use that option. I looked about and saw about 300 yards away a used car lot with a nice gravel surface and with the cars so arranged that I would be able to drive right in one side of the lot and out the other. Looking forward to this solution I drove on the flat tire (which was shot anyway) to the lot and set to work. It was a job as the jack didn't have enough "reach" to raise the truck sufficiently to permit the good tire to be installed. However, behind the office I found some scrap lumber and put it under the jack and "eureka", the problem was solved.

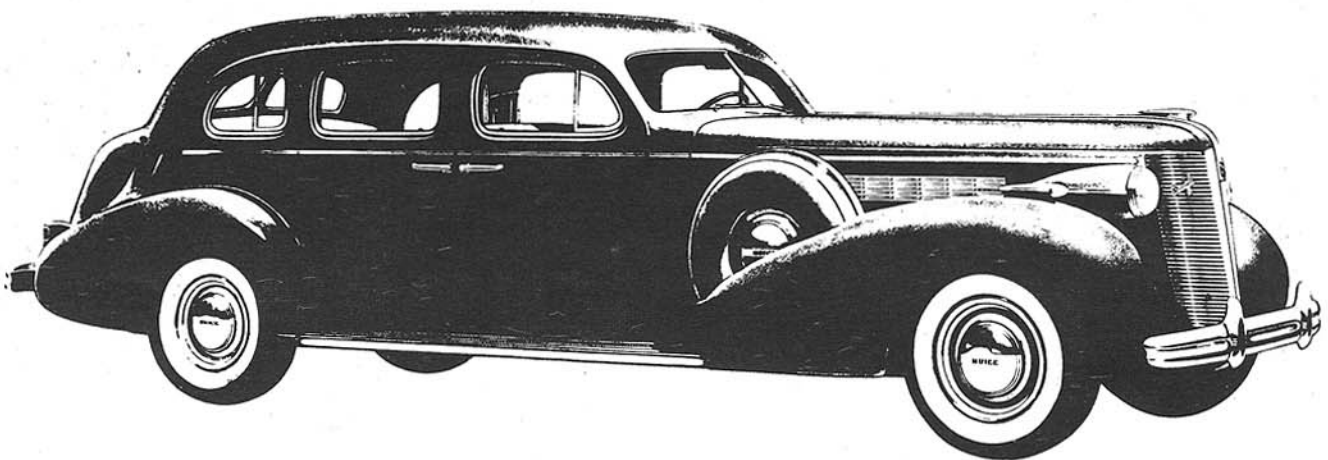


A nice line-up of '38s at the 1988 BCA National in Flint (photo by Bill Shipman (#617)).

Things proceeded without incident until I got very near Toledo when it began to snow. Not just a few flakes but a real "whiteout" storm! Just what I didn't need! It was so bad that I couldn't see where I was going, so I decided that there was little choice but to stay over. By the time that I looked up a motel, however, the storm had abated so I decided to continue. As I crossed the Michigan border the sun came out and there was no snow on the ground. Things were fine until I got to Brighton when more snow began to fall. When I got to M-59 I pulled into a station to fill the tank and talked to a fellow who was going south. He said that it was very slippery and cars and trucks were sliding off the road into the ditch. I didn't need any problems of that kind so I stayed over at a nearby motel. In the morning the sun was out and things looked much better and I headed for home. Unfortunately, near Flint I found that the road had been salted and was wet and sloppy which caused me much consternation as my Jeep had never been subjected to the like in all its years. However, there was little that I could do about the situation but grit my teeth and continue. I ran out of the mess by the north side of Flint but the damage had been done. Continuing north I encountered another "dose" of the same in and near Mio. I struggled on, running out of the mess north of Fairview and arrived home about 2:30 p.m. I doubt that the Buick suffered from the experience as it was up on the trailer and what salt got on it was superficial and on the "outside"—not underneath where it would be difficult to remove thoroughly.

All the work I left behind was waiting for me and a whale of a lot more, too. And with spring at hand the little woman had a lengthy list of chores laid out for my attention. Thus, everything else went by the board.

I like to drop the pan on any old car I acquire inasmuch as one doesn't really know the history of the car in spite of any fill-in from the prior owner. If there isn't any crud in the crankcase no harm has been done and checking it for cleanliness can't hurt anything. I settled down yesterday afternoon to do this simple but satisfying chore only to find that a couple of the pan bolts had been snapped off. Well, I can use easyouts but lying on my back looking up isn't my favorite sport so today I'm taking the beast to my local friendly mechanic who, fortunately, is somewhat of an old car fan himself (1957 Chevrolet).



“Drive Anywhere”



BY DAVID BYLSMA (#117) — HANOVER, MD

The picture shows a car my father used to own. It's a 1938 model 41. The photo was taken in 1962, just after we moved to Maryland from Florida. At the time it was the only car we owned. My father drove it every day, anywhere. He pulled that trailer, with a wife and four children in the car, all the way from Florida.

My father found the car in a junk yard. When he asked about the car, the junkman said that the only thing wrong was the clutch. My father drove the car around the block, got under it and adjusted the clutch linkage, and paid the junkman \$50. He then drove it for three years before selling it.

I thought you might like to hear that story. Prices sure have changed, haven't they?

Just look what you're missing, Mister!

THIS year's crop of misses knows what travel bliss is—so if you want to play leading man you'll set the stage with Buick's spry and sparkling style.

You'll put yourself out front with power that flows from a valve-in-head straight-eight engine silent and smooth and easy as water from a bubbling spring.

You'll give yourself a car that rides serene as the evening star—a level, steady, upright car, with neither wander on the straightaway nor sidesway on the curves.

You'll put foot to brakes soft and velvety as moonlight, and just about as sure as sunrise in their action.

In this year's glorious Buick you'll find controls manageable as your fingers—you'll ride in deep and cushioned comfort that leaves you ready for fun whether your journey measures five miles or fifty.

You'll travel in style—the smart, stand-out, stunning style of the bellwether car of the year—you'll travel safe and secure in a road-wise automobile built low and staunch and fortified with bodies of steel-plus-style.



GET OFF THE BEATEN TRACK —
this Buick is stout of heart and you can't make it whimper!

You'll travel as a smart man should—in the frugal, faultless, far-ranging manner that makes Buick now so clearly the master of them all.

For the astonishing thing about this marvel car is the fact that it's so easily within your financial reach—it's actually priced lower than some smaller sixes!

★ ★ ★ ★

LOWEST PRICE EVER ON A BUICK 4-DOOR SEDAN!

GENERAL MOTORS TERMS TO SUIT YOUR LIKING

WHEN
BETTER AUTOMOBILES
ARE BUILT BUICK
WILL BUILD THEM

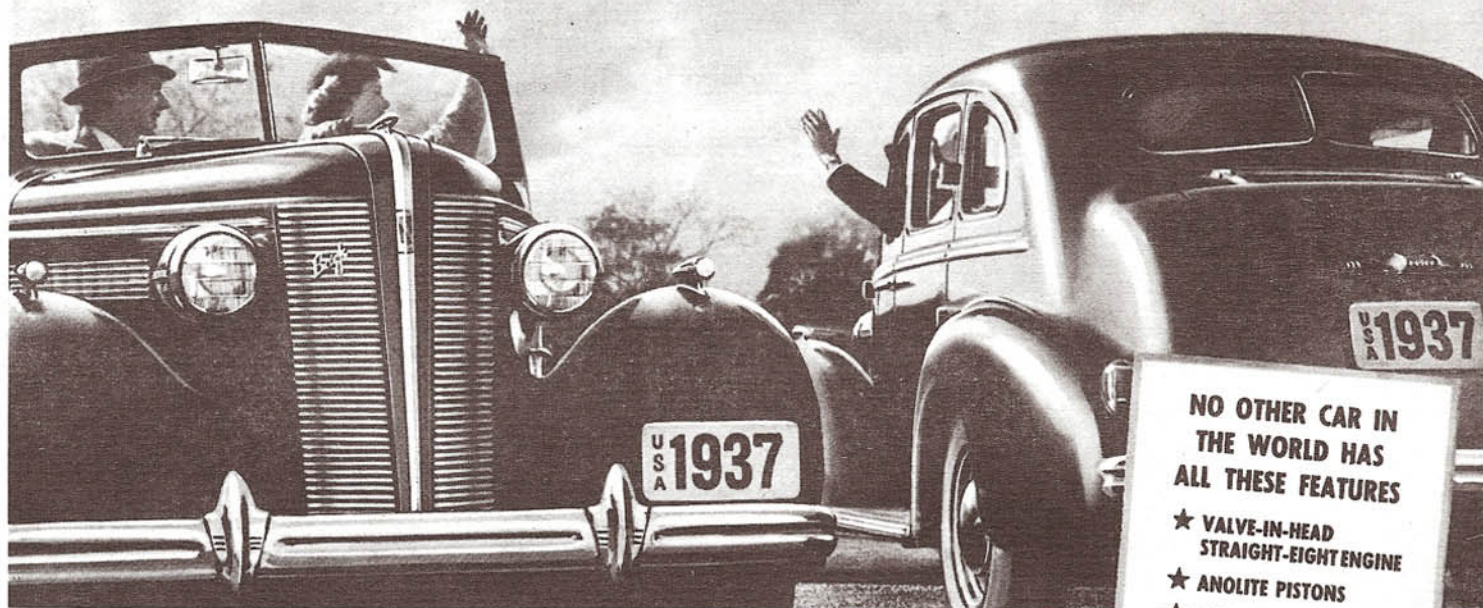
DRIVE IT FAR — drive it hard—Buick can take all you can give it—and come uncomplainingly back for more!



YOUR MONEY GOES FARTHER IN A GENERAL MOTORS CAR

What's new in the new Buick?

ALL YOU CAN SEE — AND THEN SOME



START with the radiator if you like. That's new. So is the bonnet. The headlamps are new. The door handles, the hardware, the smart interior trim—everything you can see.

Probe deeper. You find new thrift, new efficiency from a brand new all-position Aerobat carburetor. New automatic choke that puts new certainty in cold weather starting. New streamlined valves give new wallop to an easier-breathing valve-in-head engine that's already 10% more efficient, size for size, than other types.

New and higher compression steps up power. So does a new quiet muffler that cuts down exhaust pipe backpressure. New valve rocker-arms help keep powerflow quiet whether the engine is hot or cold. New high-

output generator gives you ample juice for all electrical needs.

Then add new strength and rigidity in the chassis, new length of wheelbase, new headroom in spite of new low roof lines, new lower floors, and new wider doors that are easier to pass through—and you begin to get a part of the picture.

But the big new thing in the glorious new Buicks that transcends all these is the new way it "roads" and rides and drives.

It travels with a wondrous earth-skimming steadiness, without weave, bobble or jar, without wind-wander or wheel-fight, without urging or labor—its controls so sure and responsive they seem like extensions of your own hands and feet.

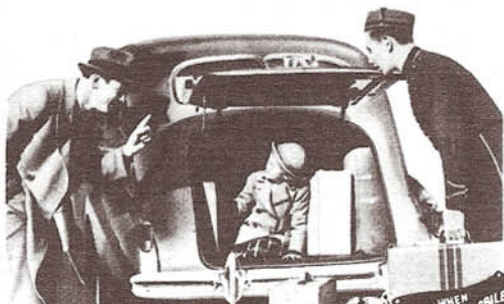
Like a merry heart it goes all the day. Tough runs won't faze, strain or weary it. It's quick as youth on the uptake, quiet as a cloud, and whatever the duty game and gallant as an aviator's wife.

What's new in Buick? Try one and see. You'll find the answer is *everything*, including even the *value*, list prices on these great new cars now being the lowest in all Buick history.

NO OTHER CAR IN THE WORLD HAS ALL THESE FEATURES

- ★ VALVE-IN-HEAD STRAIGHT-EIGHT ENGINE
- ★ ANOLITE PISTONS
- ★ AEROBAT CARBURETOR
- ★ SEALED CHASSIS
- ★ TORQUE-TUBE DRIVE
- ★ UNISTEEL BODY BY FISHER
- ★ TIPTOE HYDRAULIC BRAKES
- ★ KNEE-ACTION COMFORT AND SAFETY
- ★ "HIGH OUTPUT" GENERATOR
- ★ JUMBO LUGGAGE COMPARTMENTS
- ★ DOUBLE STABILIZATION
- ★ SAFETY GLASS

LOWEST BUICK PRICES EVER! At today's prices, a big Buick valve-in-head straight eight costs little more than the average six outside the lowest price field! See your dealer and learn how little more buys a bellwether Buick . . . GENERAL MOTORS TERMS TO SUIT YOUR LIKING



STOWAWAYS FIND ROOM HERE

Give the little girl a hand for trying! She knew there would be room to spare in Buick's jumbo luggage compartment—even after you've stowed away all the luggage you'll need. You could go around the world with the baggage you can carry here.

WHEN BETTER AUTOMOBILES ARE BUILT BUICK WILL BUILD THEM

"It's Buick again!"

YOUR MONEY GOES FARTHER IN A GENERAL MOTORS CAR



TECHNICAL TIPS



ANOTHER REAR END SWAP

By Al Anderson (#723)

Dear Bill:

Thank you for the literature you sent regarding 37 rear changes. After checking out several ways of updating rear axle gear ratios for 37-38 Buicks, I decided there had to be a better way.

After unsuccessfully trying to locate a rear or parts car, my fellow Buick enthusiast Jack Reynolds told me of a 54 Roadmaster in a well hidden location. I found it, purchased the complete rear for \$150.00, and took it home in a snow storm (on the way I was run off the road by a school bus and messed up my son's 87 S-10 pick-up. \$4,000.00 worth of damage but neither myself or the rear were hurt).

After a couple days of checking various differences and similarities of the two rears, I came up with a way of installing the 54 into my 37 66S without destroying any 37 parts. If I wish, I could return to all original 37 with no problem. The installation took about 20 work hours and works great. I now have a 3:40 axle ratio and my century can run out on the highway with modern traffic. The big 320 has so much torque I feel it could pull strong with even higher ratios. like 3:08 for instance.

The car runs great after a total mechanical rebuild, but without the gear change it would not be as enjoyable. At 60 mph she is quiet and smooth. My wife Joan and I are driving to Batavia (barring all unforeseen events) and will look for you there.

Anybody interested in how I went about my gear change can write or call for information.

See you in Batavia.

Al Anderson
AL AND Joan Anderson

780 Lakeview Drive
Lakewood, N. J. 08701

EDITOR'S NOTE: Thanks to Al Anderson for this intriguing invitation. At least one other person has done something similar: former member Jim Hernke of Wisconsin put a '53 or '54 Dynaflo rear end into a '37 Roadmaster. In

Jim's case, the job was considerably more difficult and required custom-fabrication of several parts and modification of the frame x-member. That is primarily because the '37 80 and 90 series cars do not have hypoid rear ends. Rather, they carry over into its last year the older-style gears, and are thus much different in that respect (and many others) from all other '37 and '38 Buicks.

REPAIR OF FUEL TANK SENDING UNITS -- REVISITED

By Jack K. Holmes, Ph.D. (#583)

This article is based on the repair of a 1937 Buick model 46 (37 business coupe), although it certainly should apply to most all 37 and 38 Buicks as well as other years and other cars.

The excellent article by Paul Culp (Vol. V, No 1, pg 19-23) and the cork float suggestion, also by Paul Culp (Vol. IV, no 4, pg 17) are must reading before tackling the fuel gauge sending unit repair.

First let us consider the diagnosis of the problem. With the ignition turned on, the wire connection in the trunk (left side on the 37-46) is first disconnected and kept away from any metal. The gauge should then read "full". Then with the wire still disconnected use a clip lead or spare wire and connect the clip lead to the wire (from the dash gauge) to ground (i.e. the bumper for example). The gauge should then read "empty".

If the above two tests check out, the gauge and the wire from the gauge to the connection is good. The problem then resides in either the wire to the sending unit, the unit itself, or in its ground connection. Figure 1 illustrates the gasoline sending unit with the float in the full and empty positions.

Figure 2 illustrates the dash gauge and the sending unit tank resistance positioning for full and empty positions. When the tank float is high the attraction of the right coil dominates and the pointer points to full. When the tank is empty the rheostat draws more current through the left coil and less current through the right coil so that the left coil dominates and the pointer indicates empty.

Assuming that the problem is in the wire or the sending unit it is necessary to remove each one and check their condition. Following a suggestion of fellow member Jim Wallace I did not remove the gas tank from the car. The removal of the tank is not a simple job on the coupe since it usually requires the removal of the right rear fender.

First, all the gas was drained from the tank by using an inexpensive (99 cent) siphon from an auto parts supply store which was hooked up to the gas line coming out of the tank. I found that by removing the gas cap and blowing into the tank the gas started siphoning without having to pump the pump of the siphon.

With the gas drained and supporting the tank with a pair of floor jacks I removed both nuts holding the straps on the tanks. Then I lowered the left side down as far as it was willing to go (without putting a strain on the filler pipe). The gas filler pipe is on the right side of the car.

Next I removed the wire going to the tank unit using a small wrench. Then using a stub screw driver and a z-shaped screw driver I removed the five screws. To remove the sending unit takes some patience and careful rotation and maneuvering. With the sending unit removed the next step is to disassemble the sending unit after checking the wire for continuity.

To check the wire that runs from the trunk to the sending unit one can reattach it to the wire in the trunk and ground the terminal end to a convenient ground and turn the ignition on. It should still read "empty", which indicates the problem lies in the sending unit. If it does not read empty the problem lies in the wire.

The problem has thus been reduced to a bad ground or a defective sending unit. A ground check could be made after lowering the tank and before removing the wire to the sending unit. This is done by loosening the screw of the sending unit nearest the front of the car. Attach a jumper wire to this screw and retighten. Then connect the other end to a good ground such as the bumper. Turn the ignition on, if it now reads empty when it did not before, the problem lies in the tank ground. In this case an additional wire from this screw can be run to a convenient hole in the frame where should be attached. The last problem area is the sending unit.

The brass grommets must be removed from the sending unit if the unit needs repairing. This should be done carefully since it is best to use them again if replacements cannot be found. Carefully bend the small tangs holding the intake pipe so that the unit can be disassembled. Clean the resistance wire with emery paper or a fine brush. If it is broken either obtain a replacement or you can insert a small piece of plated tin can material to wedge behind the break trying to touch only a couple of loops of wire on each side of the break. This approach will tend to cause a slightly lower reading on the gauge reading however.

My sending unit rheostat (resistance wire) appeared to be in very good condition and it measured about 3.5 ohms when at the empty position of the float arm and about 35 ohms at the full position (with the readings taken with a multimeter).

Because I did not follow the next step, I had to go through the whole procedure of lowering the tank and removing the sending unit twice! The next step is to replace the cork floats. I strongly recommend removing the old floats even if they look to be in good shape. This is especially true if your problem was a near empty gauge reading all of the time, which was the problem that I faced when I started to repair my unit.

Apparently the cork material absorbs something from the gasoline which increases its weight and prevents it from floating at the top of the gasoline.

New corks of the exact length (and slightly smaller diameter) can be obtained as replacement parts for a Model A Ford float from Gaslight auto parts part no. A-9320-S, P.O. box 291, Urbana, Ohio 43078 (telephone no. 513/6522145). Be sure to order two kits since there is one cork float per kit. The cost for two was about \$6.00. Local antique parts stores also have them. The small difference in the outside diameter is unimportant.

I filed the crimp on the wire holding the corks just enough to force the flat washer off and then remove the old corks. New ones install easily and then the end should be crimped so that they don't fall off. After cleaning the terminal connection the unit should be reinstalled, unless some further repair is required.

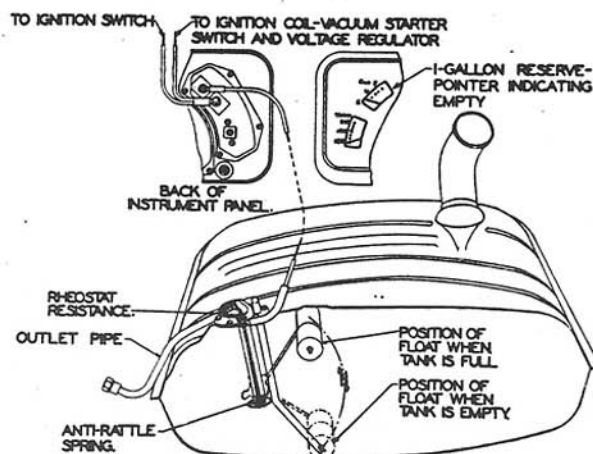
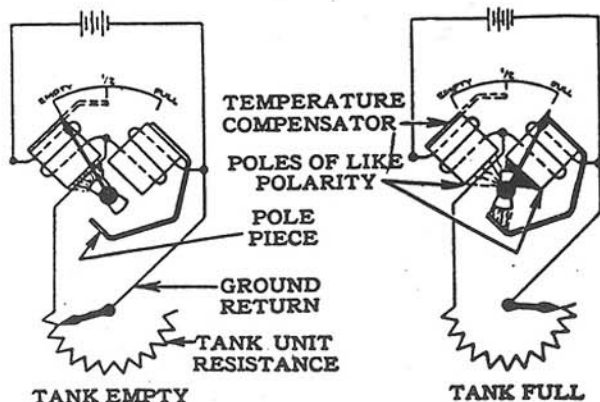
After reassembling the unit with the old grommets and a new gasket (made out of cork gasket material and cut with a exacto blade or single-sided razor blade) it is ready to test out of the car.

Attach the wire to the terminal of the sending unit and reconnect the other end of the wire to the wire in the trunk. Then connect a wire from one of the screws on the unit to a convenient ground. Turn the ignition on and mechanically move the float arm up and down observing the movement of the dash gauge. If it moves smoothly up to full and back the repair has been effected. If not check the above steps carefully.

If the gauge does not read exactly zero at the lowest position of the float arm, it can be bent slightly to obtain a lower reading by rotating the contact brush towards the sending unit terminal. This is a risky adjustment that I wouldn't recommend personally, since it would be difficult to find another sending unit if your is broken in the bending process.

It should go without saying that extreme caution should be exercised in working with a gasoline tank since any sort of ignition can set it off.

To summarize, the repair of the gasoline sending unit can be a considerably easier job when it is not necessary to remove the gas tank. And it sure is nice not having to wonder how much gas is left in the tank!



Engine Rebuilding ~ Part 9:

Cylinder Heads

By PAUL B. CULP, Jr.

"Dynaflash.....expresses in a word your thought reactions after you have driven behind this quiet, smooth, powerful Buick valve-in-head engine. The valve-in-head design has much to do with the brilliant performance you get from this engine." These words are from the opening pages of the 1938 Owners Manual. Indeed, Buick was in good company with its valve-in-head design. The record-setting aircraft and the great European Grand Prix auto racers of the 1930's, as well as the strikingly "modern," 100 mph Burlington "Zephyr," the first American long-distance diesel-powered passenger train, all used overhead-valve engines. Their designers recognized that the valve-in-head engine had the edge over other types of engines. This design breathes easily and deeply with the minimum amount of air flow restrictions, as compared to the flat head or L-head configuration that was common to many other makes from Ford to Packard.

The Buick overhead valve design was the standard, pioneered in 1902, and applied ever since. For many decades Buick advertised "Valve-in-head Motor Cars." The success, and now-common use of the design, is a tribute to David Dunbar Buick, Walter Marr and Eugene Richard. Their patent is little remembered in engine manufacturing circles today, but its application and principle is now an integral part of the reciprocating power plant.

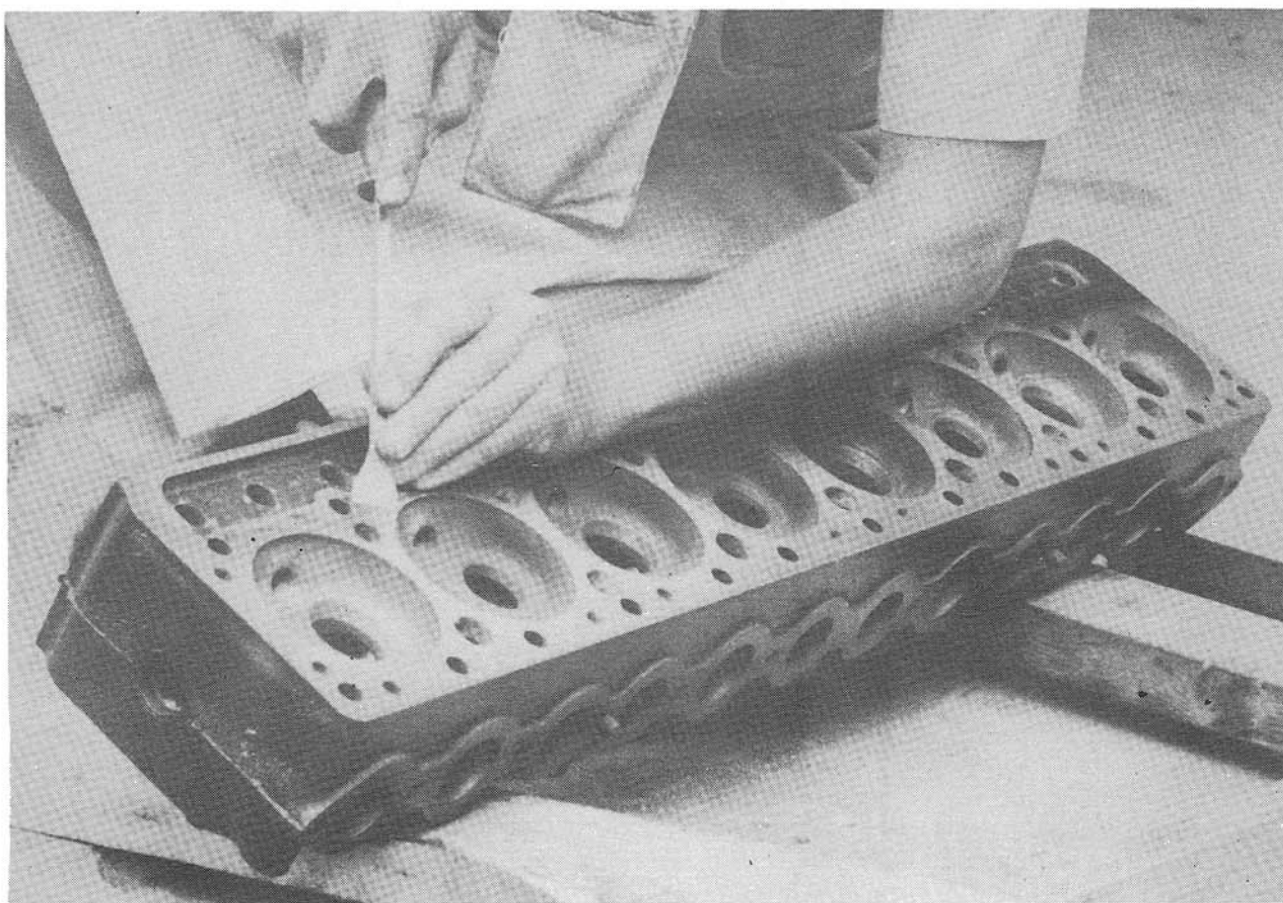


The cylinder heads in 1937 and 1938 Buicks appear similar but are not interchangeable. For years, through 1937, the 18mm spark plug was used, then in 1938 the head was changed to incorporate the smaller 14mm spark plug. This was necessary to accommodate 1938's new combustion chamber shape and piston design. Remember, this was the beginning of the "Dynaflash Era."

Aside from engine blocks, my 60-series Buick cylinder head was the heaviest piece of iron I had ever encountered. In preparation for removal I

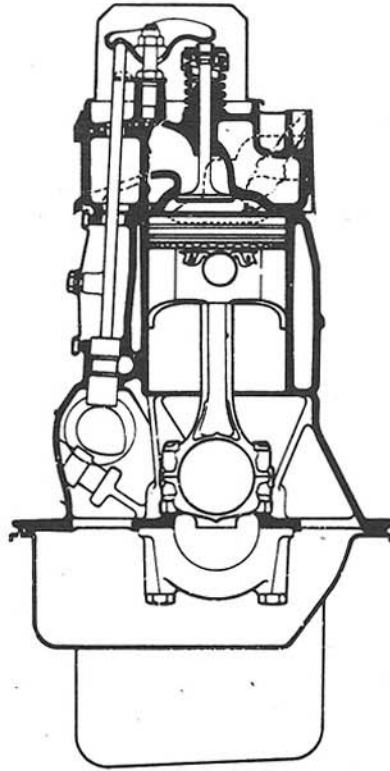
made it as light as possible. I began with the engine at room temperature. The carburetor and intake and exhaust manifolds were removed, followed by the rocker arm and push rod covers. Fuel and vacuum lines were either pushed to the side or removed. The thermostat housing, upper radiator hose and related water pump components were extracted and stored for later cleaning. Push rods were then removed and stored in their sequence and the 22 head bolts were loosened and removed.

The head required some coaxing with a soft faced hammer. Resist the temptation to whack a heavy screwdriver between head and block. If wood wedges don't free the head, seek expert help. I elevated the head with wooden shims to clear the two long studs, one at each end of the block. About four inches was required so that a 2 x 10 could be placed between cylinder block and head, across the fenders and then carried over to my work place. Having saved my back with this technique, I was prepared to press on and ready the head for my automotive machine shop.



Scraping old gasket off cylinder head.

The valves and springs were first removed, numbered and located in a wooden carrier. (Valve resurfacing will be addressed in a future article.) Careful examination was made of the head before actual cleaning, since it is possible to observe in some cases the effect of compression leakage due to a blown gasket or a warped head or block. Evidence of leaking core plugs or cracks in the water jacket may also be noted at this stage. Burned exhaust valves and their location will also be apparent.



Typical valve-in-head configuration. Push-rod-operated overhead valve design allows the camshaft to be placed low in the block, where it is more easily driven and lubricated.

The cylinder head was sent out for cleaning in a hot tank. The head is placed in a bath to dissolve water jacket deposits (rust, oil and anti-freeze). This is done after all core plugs or freeze plugs are removed. If a plug leaks on your reconditioned Buick engine it might require a complete tear-down due to the inaccessible location of the plug.

After cleaning, the head is checked for cracks. This is one of the most important parts of rebuilding a cylinder head. Two methods other than visual inspection may be used to locate material flaws and stress cracks. "Magnaflux" is a magnetic process applicable to our Buick cast iron heads. The "Zyglo" process coats the material with a fluorescent dye penetrant and can be used with aluminum and other metals as well as iron. A dye is sprayed on a suspected area, which is then wiped off and sprayed with a developer, causing cracks to show up brightly. Next the head was pressure-tested for coolant leaks.

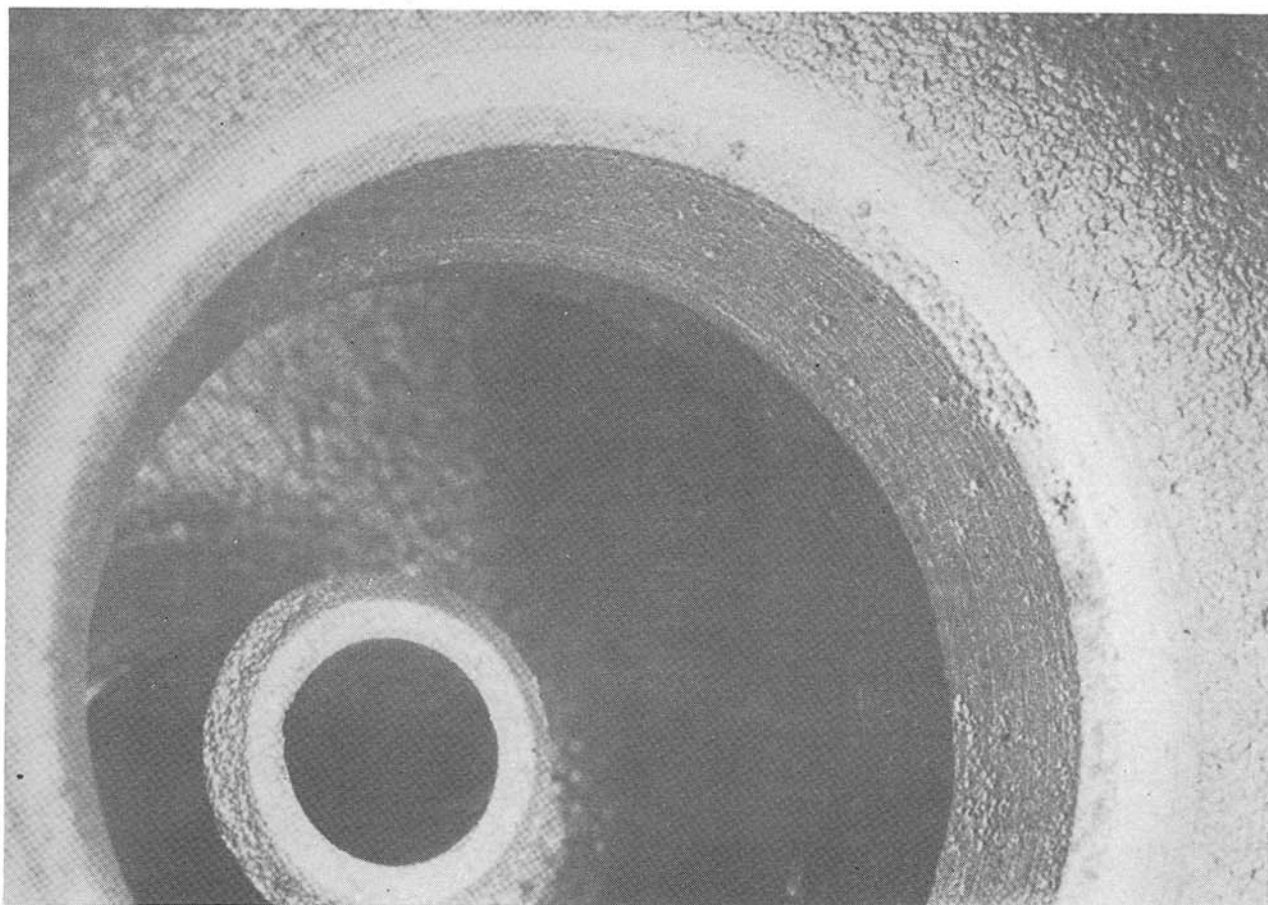
When the head passed all of these tests, the next step was to inspect the head for warpage, using a straightedge and thickness gauge. The straightedge is placed on both axes. A feeler gauge is applied to determine the warpage. Some warping is not uncommon, and the head should be machined flat. Due to the length of the straight-eight Buick head, I requested that the machine shop in resurfacing the head, remove the minimum amount of material.

Upon completion of the preceding operation, I collected the head and continued the repair in my own shop. The cost at this point was approximately \$75. The valve guides were then inspected and checked for wear, using both a used and new valve. Place the new valve in the guide and measure from the

rocker arm position. While the valve is off its seat by approximately 1/4 inch, measure the side play or looseness of the valve in the hole. Up to .006 is considered normal. Reconditioning is expected if wear exceeds this, by knurling the guide and reaming to size, or complete replacement of the guide or guides in question.

Guides being within specifications, I proceeded to the valve seats. Most were pitted from rust, some were acceptable and one was burned. From past experience I determined that the seats could be resurfaced with a valve grinder. If the seats were beyond repair, replaceable inserts could be installed, using either hardened steel or "Stellite" inserts. Considering that unleaded gas will be used from now on, it is a good idea, if there is any question about valve seats, to have your machine shop install these inserts. Typical costs for machine shop work might be about \$5.00 each for simple grinding of seats (\$80.00 in all), \$120 to install new seats, plus about \$100 additional if Stellite seats are used. A lot has been written about the allegedly damaging effect of unleaded gas on older engines without hardened valve seats. (Lead acts as a valve lubricant, in addition to being an "octane" booster.) For an antique car driven relatively few miles a year and infrequently pushed to high RPM, the whole controversy is probably much ado about very little; however, if seats must be replaced it seems better, for a comparatively modest additional cost, to be safe than sorry.

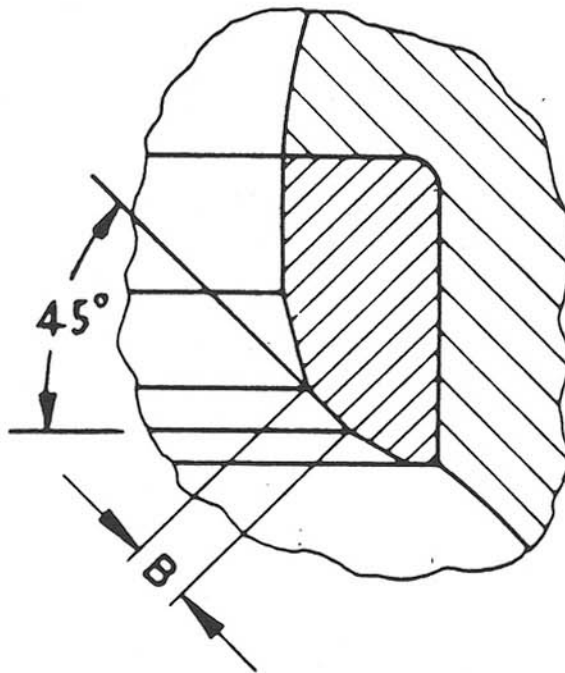
Using a Hall valve grinder in my shop, the seats were resurfaced, removing the minimum amount of metal. After this, the seats were narrowed 15



Pitted valve seats require resurfacing.

degrees on one side and 70 degrees on the other. The seat width was kept at approximately **.065-.070** inch. It is most important to retain this critical width to achieve good valve sealing on the 45 degree surface. Too narrow or too wide will cause valve burning. The unit pressure of the valve and seat must be retained for proper spring pressure and sealing of compression gases.

After cleaning and a coat of Buick Green paint on the head, I was ready for the valves; please stay tuned, the head is almost ready for application.



Valve seat angle and width ("B").

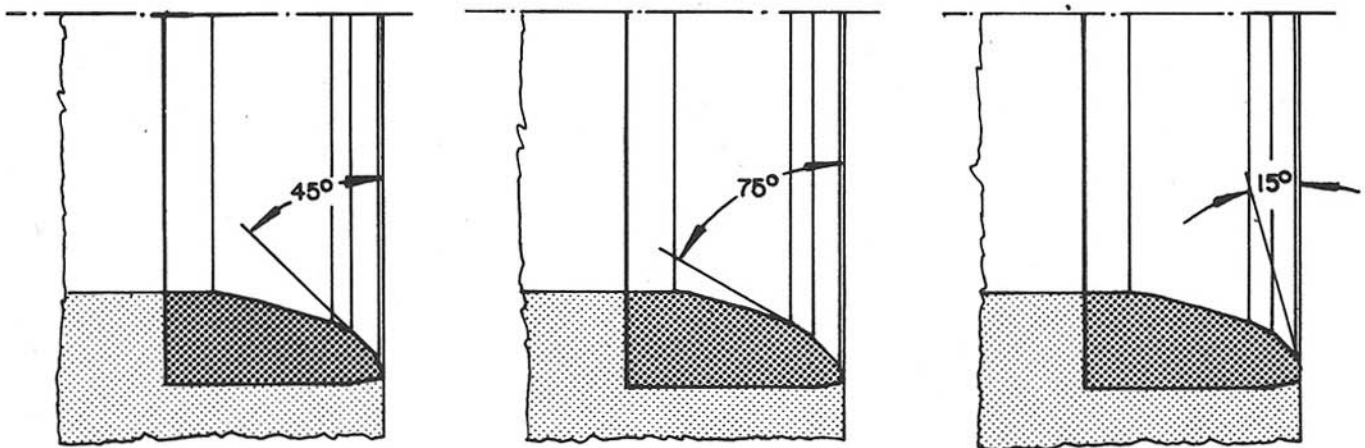
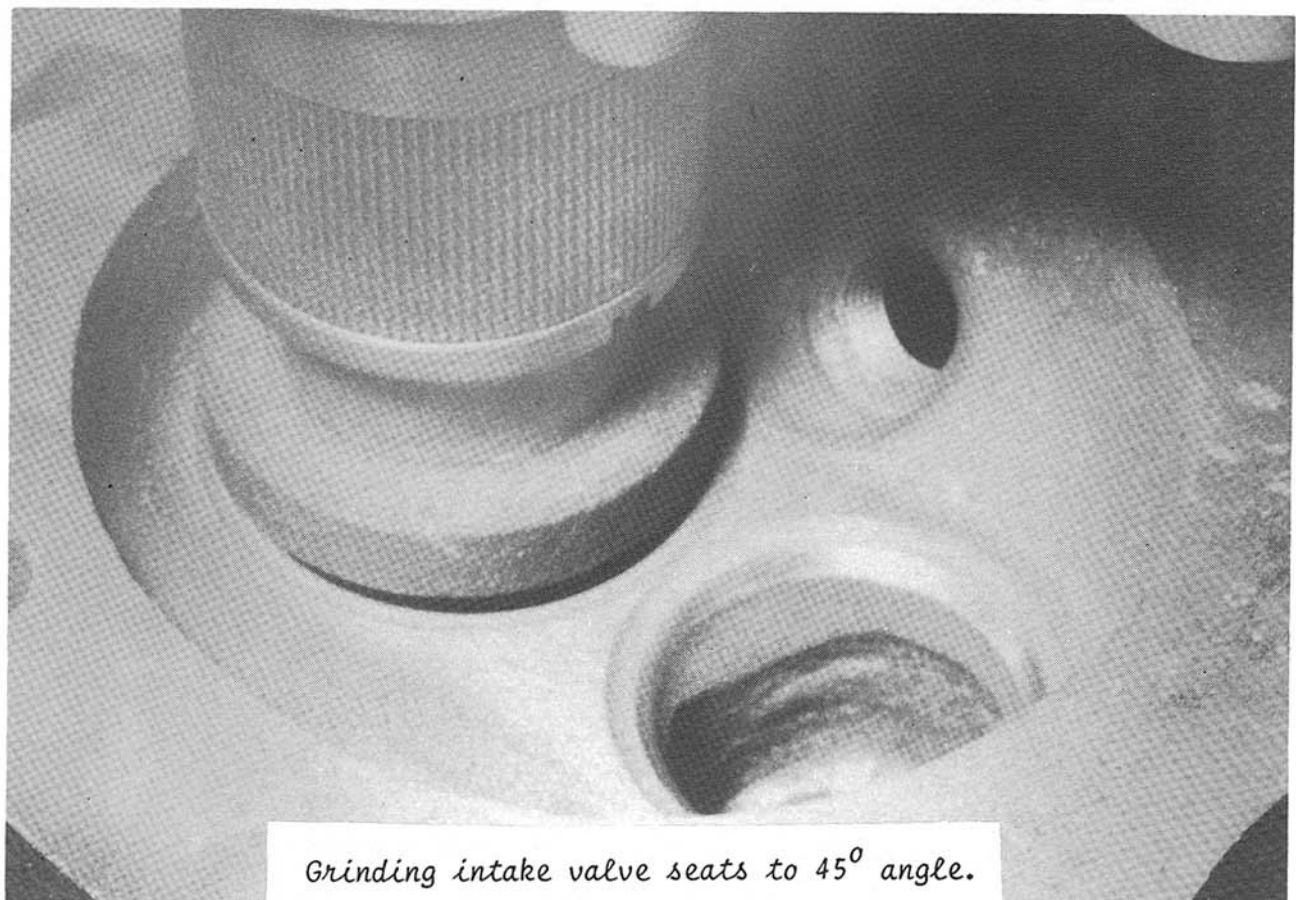
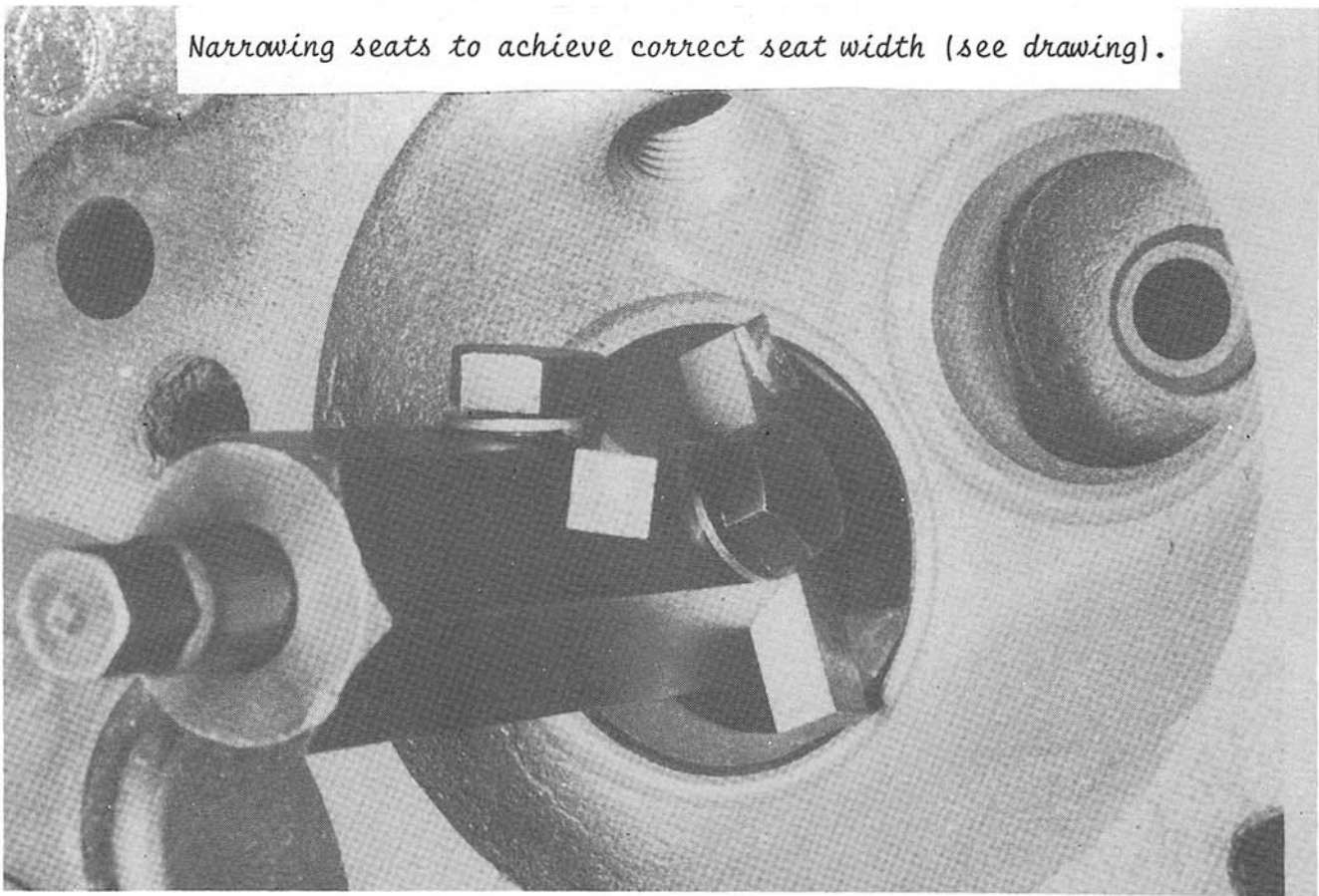


Figure 1 Cutting wheels with three different angles are used to position the 45° face properly

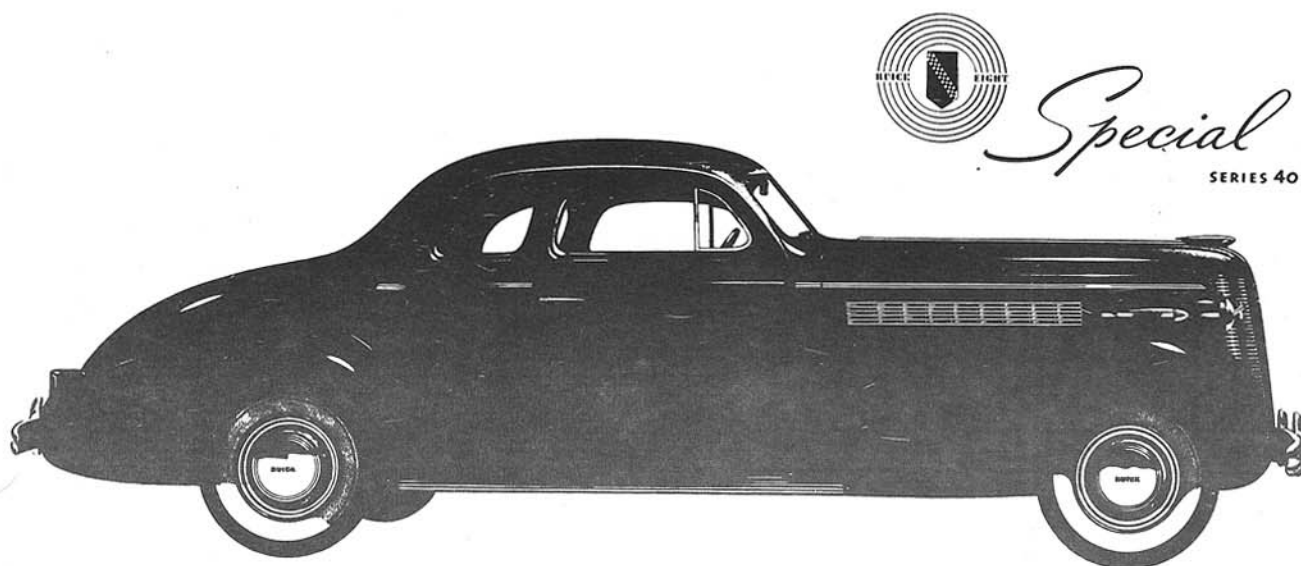
Narrowing seats to achieve correct seat width (see drawing).



Grinding intake valve seats to 45° angle.



Using a Hall seat grinder: the grinder is placed on a spindle which is concentric to the valve guide. (The grinder is 1930's-vintage.)





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219/696-1843.

WANTED: For '37 66-S convertible, I need a front seat. A seat from a two-door sedan would be OK. Also need two '37 15" wheels, ammeter, speedometer head. AL ANDERSON (#723). 780 Lakeview Drive, Lakewood, NJ 08701. 201/370-1422.



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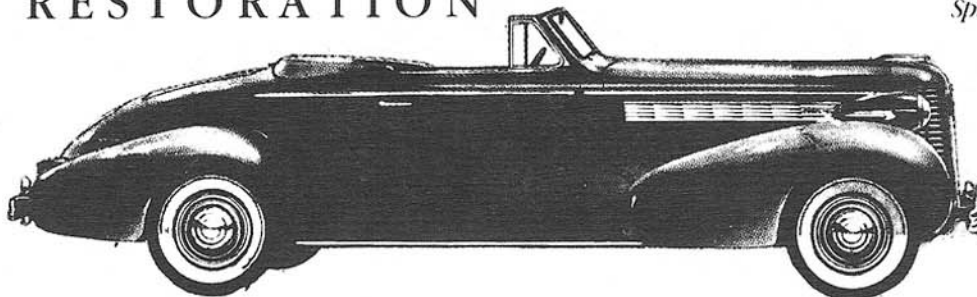
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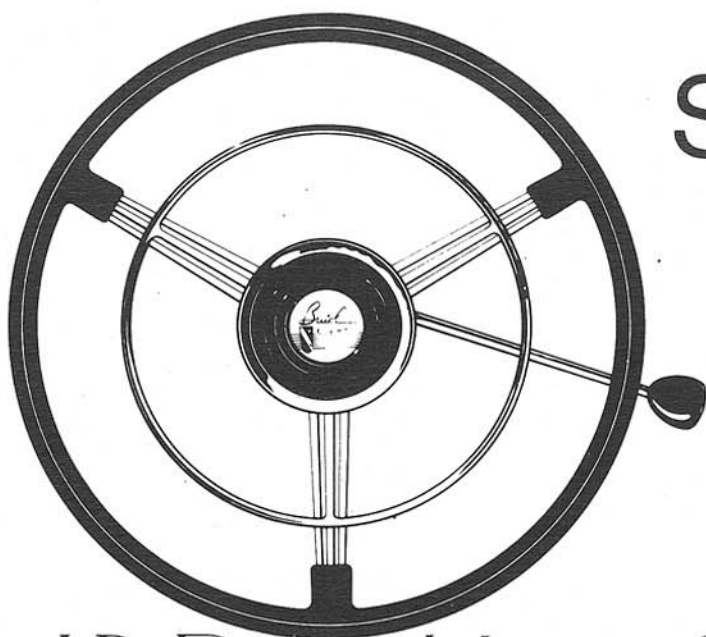


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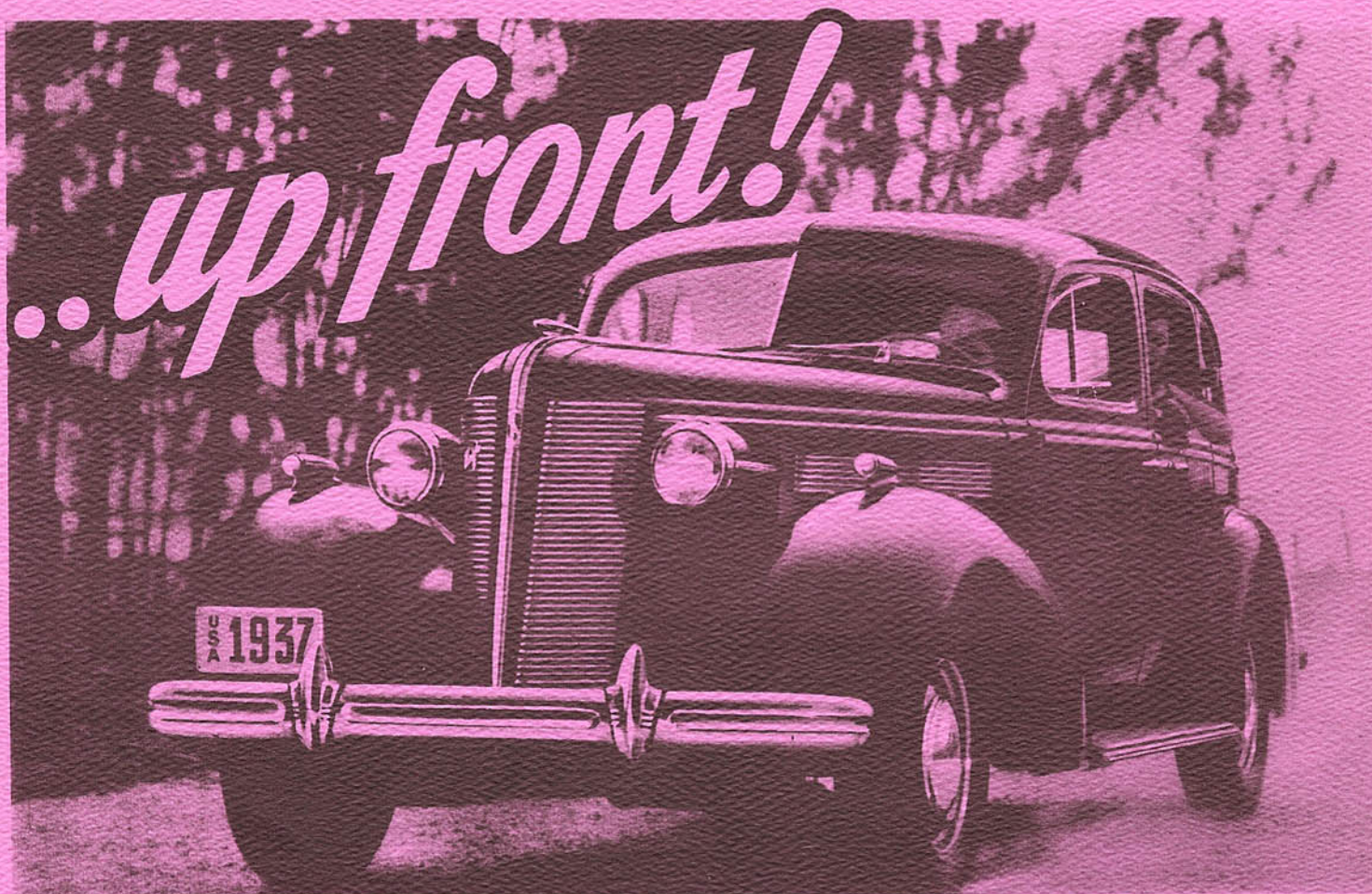
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